

*m Use of Communications Devices Prohibited
When Operating City Motor Vehicles or
Driving Personal Vehicles for City Business*

SCOPE

City employees are prohibited from using personal communications devices and/or wearing any type of headset/headphones including Bluetooth, to either send, receive, listen to and/or review communications at any time while driving City-owned/leased vehicles for any purpose or while driving their personal vehicles on City business. This policy also applies while operating a, moving and/or in-gear motorized off-road equipment.

This policy does not apply to the use of communications devices issued to first responders (Fire and Police) for official emergency communications, Police Department issued laptop/notebook computers for police vehicles, and City-issued two-way radio with push-to-talk technology when no passenger is in the vehicle.

DEFINITIONS

Employee - Any individual employed by and/or paid by the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore. This includes hourly and salaried workers, supervisors, managers, department heads, bureau heads, and elected officials and their appointed staffs. The policy also includes consultants, volunteers and staff provided by temporary agencies (seasonal employees) while operating their own personal vehicle on City business.

Personal Communications Device - Personally owned or City issued, communication devices such as, but not limited to, cell phones, pagers, text pagers, two-way radios, wireless devices (Blackberries etc), Bluetooth technology, speakerphones and/or headsets/headphones of any type.

Hands Free Communications Device – Any communication device/equipment not requiring the use of hands or to be held by hands.

Motorized Vehicle - Any Vehicle registered with the State MVA (car, van, truck) and/or any State or Department of Transportation (DOT) registered vehicle.

WHAT IS PROHIBITED

The following represent unsafe acts and are **NOT** allowed:

- Any use of a cell phone when driving;
- The writing, sending or reading of text or email messages when driving;

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- The use of any voice activated technologies to write, send, or read text or email messages while driving;
- The use of a Personal Communications Device by the driver while operating a moving and/or in-gear motorized vehicle;
- The use of laptop, notebook, net book, iPad or other type of computer when driving;
- The use of two-way radio by driver/operator when another a passenger, is able to handle the communication;
- The use of any hand-held or hands free communication device in any manner while fueling and/or refueling any vehicle (personal, City, or other) at any time in any location; and
- The use of any hand-held or hands free communication device at any location involving a potential or confirmed fuel spill, gas leak, or any potentially hazardous and/or flammable spills or vapors.

WHAT IS ALLOWED

- The use of City-issued two-way radio that operates with push-to-talk technology is allowed to be used by the driver/operator only in situations when there is no passenger employee present in the cab or vehicle who is able to use the radio communication;
- The use of a personal communications device by first responders for official emergency communications;
- The use of Police Department issued laptop/notebook computers for marked patrol vehicles; and
- The use of a wireless communication device to contact a 9-1-1 system.

PLACING OR RECEIVING CALLS AND MESSAGES

If communication is necessary using a personal communications device either outgoing or incoming, the driver is to wait until he/she reaches a safe place to park before placing or receiving calls, text messaging and emailing.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Failure to comply with this policy may result in loss of an employee's City driving permit and/or progressive disciplinary action up to and including termination.